

Central Intelligence Agency

Washington, D.C. 20505

22 May 1984

Mr. Joe Williams
US International Trade Commission
701 E Street, NW
Washington, DC 20436

Dear Mr. Williams:

In response to your request for information regarding the production and export of goods manufactured by convict, forced, or indentured labor in selected countries, we are enclosing analyses of the forced labor activities in Poland, Romania, and China. As we indicated previously this is not a topic on which we have focused, except on the USSR. CIA unclassified studies on the overall Soviet forced labor system were made available through State Department's review prepared for Congress in November 1982 and February 1983. Recently we forwarded to you a more detailed classified study of the specific products manufactured by Soviet forced laborers, which was prepared in November 1983 for the Bureau of Customs.

The enclosed studies, which were prepared by the Office of European Analysis and the Office of East Asian Analysis, represent the extent of our knowledge on these Communist areas. Unfortunately, all of your questions could not be completely addressed, but we hope the basic data will serve your needs.

If you have further questions, please contact [redacted]
[redacted] the Geography Division, Office of Global Issues,
[redacted]

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Sincerely,

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[redacted]
Deputy Director of Global Issues

Enclosure:

Forced Labor in Selected Communist Countries
GI M-84-10092, May 1984 [redacted]

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SUBJECT: Forced Labor in Selected Communist Countries

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OGI/GD/ERA, (18May84)

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Forced Labor in Selected Communist CountriesPoland

There are three types of correctional institutions in Poland, all under the administration of the Ministry of Justice: (1) major prisons for convicts serving long sentences for serious crimes; (2) jails or detention centers for less serious offenders or those being held for pretrial detention; and (3) correctional institutions for juveniles. There are, in addition, a number of juvenile "shelters" which are similar to reform schools with vocational training. We have no reliable figures for the number of prisoners. The authorities claim there are now about 80,000 imprisoned for common crimes while Western sources place the number between 160,000 and 200,000 (the total Polish population is 37 million). In addition, as of early May 1984 the regime admits to about 450 persons imprisoned for politically motivated offenses. [redacted]

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Individuals convicted of common crimes are, by law, expected to work, while political prisoners are not. We cannot, however, provide a systematic breakdown of the nature of the work undertaken. There is evidence that some prisons contain their own workshops and have in the past produced such items as shoes, tables, and radio cabinets. Prisoners have also been known to work on state farms and to do general construction work and occasional jobs for local factories. The Polish authorities are currently considering changes in the penal code to allow persons sentenced to up to two years in prison and those with not more than two years left of their sentence to serve out their time in an "out-of-prison system of organized labor." No details are available, however. [redacted]

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Since the imposition of martial law, the Poles have tightened up their laws on so-called "work shirkers." Men between the ages of 18 and 45 who are unemployed for more than three months are told to report to local factories for employment, presumably at the lowest legal wage. Those who refuse can be sent to do such public service as street cleaning or streetcar track repair. Persistent work shirkers can also be fined or imprisoned. There are no accurate figures for the size of this program. An official government spokesman said that 30,000 individuals had been investigated in the first half of 1983, and the large majority, reportedly, accepted employment. [redacted]

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Romania

The penal system in Romania officially comprises three types of institutions: prisons, correction camps, and colonies. As of 1972, the regime

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[redacted]

grouped four types of institutions under the category of prisons: penitentiaries, prison factories, town jails, and special secret police detention facilities. We have no reliable figures for the number of prisoners. [redacted]

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Individuals convicted of crimes are, generally speaking, expected to work. According to special penal measures promulgated in 1977, all persons convicted of crimes for which the sentences did not exceed five years were "as a rule" to serve their sentence through work in the economic unit in which they had already been employed or in some other factory, shop, farm, or forestry unit, rather than through confinement. We do not know whether these "reforms" have been carried out. [redacted] convict labor is used primarily in farm and construction work. Wages for such work reportedly amount to only a small proportion of the civilian wages for comparable work. [redacted] prisoners may have their sentences reduced if they exceed the scheduled work norm. [redacted]

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There have been a number of reports in recent years of forced labor migration from urban to rural areas. This has generally involved the movement of workers from white collar jobs into the mining and agricultural sectors, which the regime has accorded high priority as a result of worsening energy and food shortages. [redacted]

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China

Sentencing to labor camps or factory prisons is used extensively in China's penal system; probably a majority of China's criminals receive labor sentences. Two broad classifications for penal labor exist -- reeducation through labor and the much harsher reform through labor -- both of which fall under the definition of forced labor. Reeducation through labor is an administrative, not judicial, sanction and may be applied by a number of groups, including a work unit or the local Public Security Bureau. Exile to labor reform camps in remote areas is a common punishment for a wide variety of ordinary crimes as well; several hundred thousand people were so sentenced in last year's crime crackdown. We do not possess reliable estimates of the penal population -- one source reported a figure of nine million "political" prisoners in penal labor institutions. [redacted]

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The largest percentage by far of convict labor is engaged in agriculture, usually in remote areas. There are some factories and mines that employ penal labor. We have no evidence that any of these produce goods for export, but some do produce goods of a type that is exported -- for instance, socks or plastic sandals. Farm produce is generally consumed at the labor camps or sold locally; manufactured goods and minerals are sold at low prices to provincial enterprises or government units. Private or nonstate collective enterprises do not use penal labor. [redacted]

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Participation in labor is not voluntary. The Chinese authorities seem to take seriously the use of labor as a reform tool. Convicts work 6 days a week, from 8-11 hours per day. Workers are paid a nominal amount, usually about two yuan (approximately US\$1) per month. Basic food -- rice or other grain and vegetables -- is provided. Prisoners may buy other foodstuffs or receive gifts from relatives. Living conditions in established camps are spartan but in most camps a living standard not unlike that in China's poor

regions is maintained. Because of harsh climatic and working conditions, the death rate in some camps -- especially mines -- has been high; this is especially true when large numbers of prisoners are transported to a climate drastically different from that of their native place. Authorities take measures to deal with the problem, including relocation of prisoners to camps in areas where they can tolerate the climate. Discipline is strict in camps, especially the reform through labor camps. Corporal punishment is officially forbidden, but does occur. Interviews and published stories claim that China does have a Soviet-style gulag system of camps for particularly dangerous or recalcitrant political prisoners, where food is scarce, labor is hard, and physical punishment commonplace. These camps are in the remotest areas of China and are closely guarded; labor in them is used for agricultural production, mining, and probably construction. [REDACTED]

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We have no quantity or value data for production through the penal labor system, other than for a few scattered farms. Similarly, there is no information on distribution channels or commercial terms other than the fact that various provincial bureaus buy the manufactures and some of the produce at favorable terms. [REDACTED]

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